

Weekly Enterprise

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AUSTRIA.

Some Interesting Facts About the Island of Jamaica.

Victoria, of which Melbourne is the capital, is about the same size as England, or a State of moderate area in the Union. Forty-four years ago the colony or province was uninhabited by any folk except the aborigines. It now contains nearly 1,000,000 people, and the population of Melbourne numbers 250,000. This quickly-risen city has some resemblance to an American town and many features that are novel. Visitors are less struck with its architecture than with the width of the streets. In the city proper all the main thoroughfares are 90 feet wide, and they cross at right angles. On each side runs an open drain, and underground sewerage has not yet been adopted. Melbourne is visited seven or eight times in the summer by a scorching wind from the north, which dries up the surface moisture and carries off the germs of diseases that live on damp. The hot wind is peculiar to Southern and Central Australia. The interior of the island contains many rivers of small size, intersected by low ranges of mountains and traversed by few rivers. These plains support cattle and sheep in great numbers, but are subject to drought. A dry season kills the crops and exposes the lakes and pools which in summer are full of water. The winds that travel over the island plains collect heat from the surface and their temperature rises high above the dew-point. On their visit to the southern regions these warm, dry winds suck up the moisture and wither the herbage. To the native vegetation the hot wind does little injury. The scrub of the eucalyptus and acacia (the two predominant genera) are thick and stand with oil, and the roots are spread by net-work through the under-soil. The agriculturist does not mind the hot wind, for it comes at harvest time, when the crops are ripe; and the flocks of the grazier do not suffer unless the dry season lasts long, for sheep thrive on shrubs and herbs when the grass fails. It is remarkable how long the flocks can resist a drought on the inland plains. Even when the surface looks quite bare they are able to find food, and can get on well so long as the holes retain water. About once in six or eight years a drought occurs over the vast interior, and sheep perish in thousands. It is the uncertainty of the seasons that renders the ventures of the grazier precarious, and accounts for the remarkable success of some men and the misfortune of others. In spite, however, of periodic scarcity, the great industry of Australia is the wool industry, and it annually brings in millions of pounds sterling to the community.

Were it not for the occasional hot winds, and the character of the change that follows it, the climate of Melbourne would be absolutely delightful, for in winter the thermometer seldom registers less than 32 deg. Fahrenheit, and the summer heat (save on hot-wind days) ranges no higher than 80 deg. in the shade. The traveler who has seen Paris, the suburbs of London and the chief American cities makes the street curd. There are no such things in Melbourne.

run on the main line of the American type of engine, and the English for passenger traffic.

Each of the five colonies or provinces into which the continent of Australia is divided is as independent of its neighbors as if they were European republics and kingdoms. Each makes its own laws and has its own tariff. Owing to the comparative thinness of the population, which is 2,000,000 people, or a little more than 2,000 miles long and 2,000 miles wide, and to the distances between the capital cities, no scheme of federation is yet practicable. It has often been talked about—the colonies have even conferred together on the subject—but there is no immediate prospect of the establishment of an Australian dominion or union. Geographical difficulties stand in the way of concord on the subject of tariffs keep the colonies apart.

The most remarkable thing in Victoria is the temperate system, which is free, secular and compulsory. It is conducted entirely by the Government, and has been in operation for eight years. The cost of the system is \$2,500,000 per annum—a good deal for a population of less than 1,000,000 to pay for the education of 400,000 individual children, between the ages of 6 and 15. Australians are great holiday-takers, and each year the prosperous bushmen allow themselves a fortnight or three-weeks' enjoyment in Melbourne. No vacation is the middle spring season of the year, when the flowers are gay, the turf is green, and the days bright but cool. At midsummer the grass becomes brown. Australian laborers only work eight hours a day, and there are thirteen days of vacation in the course of the year. It is the duty of the employer to give a week or fortnight at Christmas and another week at Easter.

What Egyptians Eat.—Modern Egyptians are, in general, extremely temperate in regard to food. Even the richest among them do not indulge in the luxuries of the table. Their dishes mostly consist of soups and stews, prepared with a variety of onions, cucumbers, and other vegetables, mixed with a little meat, cut into small pieces. On special occasions, however, a whole sheep is placed on the festive board; but, in general, the richest restrict themselves to a vegetable diet. The poor contented with a little oil or sour milk, which they may dip their bread.

Water-Tight Mail Cases.—As a means of saving the mails going to the bottom with a sinking ship, it has been suggested that they should be enclosed, not in the usual canvas but in water-tight metal cases rendered floatable on the sea by an air-chamber in the lid. If the boxes were made of metal, they could be used for general use, and, in case of a shipwreck, the crew could be employed in the construction of a life-boat, or in the rescue of the ship.

Head Jamaica Rum.—Jamaica rum, so-called, as that article is sold in this country, has for many years had a dark color and a heavy quality which it never possessed forty or fifty years ago. This dark color is wholly or almost entirely due to impurities which are put in the rum to color it. Jamaica rum, when first distilled, is as white as water; as colorless as any other rum put in former days, in the primitive times before the abolition of slavery on the island, it was customary to use for a condenser, instead of the spiral "worm" known to most distillers, a simple coil of bamboo, leading down through water and the bamboo was in many cases prepared for the purpose by burning out a hollow passage through it, from end to end, with a red-hot iron. This imparted to the liquor a certain tint about like straw color. Of such was the "old Jamaica" that was so popular in London forty years ago. It possessed a peculiar odor and taste, unlike that of St. Croix rum, but not less distinctive; and this circumstance, of so much of the island rum possessing a kind of pale yellow tint, led dealers to venture on a slight additional coloring by the use of burnt sugar. In due time the public, in both hemispheres, came to recognize "old Jamaica" as a standard of quality. It was then that the "new Jamaica" was introduced, and the old Jamaica was gradually driven out of the market. The new Jamaica was not colored very dark red, but was case bottle of unadulterated Jamaica rum—the last remnant of a Middletown importation of that article forty years ago—was of a pale lemon or straw color, and on removing the gilded glass stopper, the peculiar aroma or bouquet of the rum would fill a room—a very different color indeed from that of the stuff which is now sold, by dealers, as well as in the dram-shops, for Jamaica rum. —Hartford Times.

How the Government Pays Bills.—A great part of the work in the department is necessarily in the line of keeping accounts, and presents little interest to people who are not exceptionally fond of figuring.

The general principle which the whole system of auditing follows is to provide every safeguard against fraud, and this is so successfully carried out that a dollar could be traced out of the treasury if it gained the collusion of any one person.

Suppose a man has a bill against the Government. The head of the department or bureau to which the property belongs makes a requisition for the amount upon the Secretary of the Treasury, using a prepared blank, asks him to cause a warrant for the amount in question to be issued in favor of the party, the same to be charged to the particular appropriation by Congress out of which the sum ought to come.

But before this requisition reaches the Secretary it must pass under the eye of the proper Auditor and Comptroller and receive their countersign. The Auditor at the same time ascertains the amount to the account of the Treasury.

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Room!

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HOUSE

Trockery,

S.

and Flour.

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